

I know my colleague from Georgia may have another amendment similar to this next up, I hope, at which point I would like to see if we can actually go a little bit further in cutting government spending. Let's talk about not just the Agriculture appropriations bill, which is the key focus of today, but also the long-term consequences of our just having a narrow, myopic focus on the current bill on the floor. Let's talk about the totality of government spending, ways that we can reform the government, limit the government, and actually get back to what is sensible.

We have a big debate going on right now about the war in Iraq. We have a big debate going on about children's health care. We have a big debate about whether or not the farm bill that we passed last week was the right thing to do and whether or not you should actually have a massive tax increase in order to implement the new programs within that formula. Many of us agree that that wasn't the right thing to do, but, unfortunately, the majority in the House did vote for that massive tax increase.

It is important that we have a discussion on health care and agriculture and the long-term consequences of these issues going forward. Certainly, the bill today and the chairman's willingness to accept a 1 percent cut in the administrative budget is a step in the right direction. We can be thankful for that.

I hope, as we go on in the debate, the Chair will be willing to accept other amendments that limit the rapid increase of funds going to the Department of Agriculture and we can actually rightsize the government. There are many on this side of the aisle who want to cut the size and scope of government. I know that the chairwoman has been willing to examine programs and reform those programs. I hope that she will be willing to accept many of the amendments we have here today.

I also know my colleague from Georgia has a number of amendments like this. It is important that we discuss the long-term consequences of our failure to limit the growth of government.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I think it is important for Members on both sides of the aisle to understand what is going to transpire here. This is a filibuster masquerading as an amendment. This amendment cuts \$50,000, a tiny, tiny symbolic sum, from the administrative account in question. But, as I see it, this is not a real amendment.

What it means is that it simply affords those who offer it, under the guise of talking about spending, to really engage in delay and delay and delay. Because their goal, if they can, is to not have the House finish its appropriations business. Their goal, also,

if they can, is to delay the SCHIP bill from coming to the floor and finally being passed by the House.

So after we have seen this administration and their allies in this House borrow \$1.2 trillion to pay for tax cuts and after we have seen them borrow another \$600 billion to finance that misbegotten war in Iraq, now they pretend that they are contributing to the public good by offering to cut spending by \$50,000; not \$50 billion, but \$50,000.

This is, in plain language, a filibuster. It is the first of many amendments that are being offered by people who are so opposed to the SCHIP proposition, which will be before us tomorrow, that they would prefer to defend \$50 billion in tax cuts for people making \$1 million a year than they would to see 5 million more kids covered by health insurance in this country. That is really what is afoot here.

Mr. Chairman, I find myself only mildly amused, because the subject really is serious. I find myself only mildly amused by the fact that, 3 days ago, we had the President announce another large, massive increase in foreign aid which he wants us to provide yet this year.

We also now increasingly are coming to understand that the President will be asking for an extension of the surge in Iraq, which will require him to ask the Congress to spend an extra \$25 billion to \$30 billion above and beyond \$140 billion he is planning to ask for in the supplemental already for this year for Iraq. So, yet, we are here mired today in this let's-pretend Potemkin debate over \$50,000.

We don't, on this side of the aisle, intend to get bogged down; at least, we don't intend to contribute to the bogging down. So we will let them drone on, drone on and drone on with their Lilliputian amendments.

Meanwhile, we recognize what is happening: If the other side wants to delay the people's business for a while, all that means is that, in the end, our colleagues won't be going home on Friday, they won't be going home on Saturday, and we will still be having Sunday dinner together.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlewoman from Tennessee is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the chairman, and I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his legislation to make a 1 percent reduction. We have got to start taking these first steps.

Year after year, I feel there is a group of us that come down here talking about how we slow the growth of government, talking about how we make reductions in what the government spends and talking about the necessity to begin with those little, tiny savings, ¼ percent, ½ percent, a solid percent, that will yield a savings. We are talking about \$5.5 million. I find it

just amazing that we can't even find \$50,000 in there. We can't agree to make that kind of reduction. There are ways to do this. That is something government should be doing.

The gentleman from Wisconsin mentioned the SCHIP program. Indeed, in our Committee on Energy and Commerce, we have been quite disheartened that the SCHIP bill that he mentioned is not going through regular order. We didn't have a committee hearing in our Health Subcommittee. We would have welcomed that.

There is nobody against health care for low-income children. What we have great concerns about is all the other stuff, all the pay-fors that are in this bill, all the expansion of policy, taking a block grant, moving it to an entitlement. It brings us back to the initial question with the gentleman's bill on this appropriations bill of making a 1 percent reduction. There has to be a way to yield a savings that will pay for some of these things, because we can't take it out of Medicare Advantage.

The SCHIP legislation that the gentleman mentioned would make an incredible reduction to Medicare Advantage. My goodness, we would see \$193 billion in reductions to our Medicare Advantage program over a 10-year period of time, which would be \$15.3 billion in cuts to Medicare Part A for seniors. This would include skilled nursing facilities, rehab facilities, and long-term care hospitals. That would be one of the pay-fors in the SCHIP bill that the gentleman referenced.

That is why the gentleman from Georgia has a great amendment that says, let's get going. In title 1, page 1 of this bill, let's start finding a way to make some reductions. \$9.6 billion in cuts to Medicare Part D for seniors is in that bill, that SCHIP bill that didn't go through subcommittee, didn't get a complete markup in committee. It is going to be moved to the floor.

So, there, again, the gentleman from Wisconsin's points on this bill is the reason we have this amendment to title 1, section 1 of this bill, to make that reduction in the Secretary's spending, \$5.5 million. Certainly, we can find \$50,000. \$3.6 billion would be cut out of end-stage renal disease in that bill. There has to be a way to start making reductions so that you're paying for the government that you are trying to spend, the money you are trying to spend, the government you are putting out there. There has got to be a way to pay for this. Unfortunately, that is not something that we are seeing considered.

Mr. Chairman, \$50,000 may not be much to the Secretary, but it is a lot to my constituents in Tennessee and especially those that are on Medicare Advantage.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I want to be clear. The gentlewoman may not be aware of it, but we